

News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth

For Immediate Release

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HERSETH SUPPORTS METH PREVENTION, EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDS

Patriot Act Includes Key Provisions for South Dakota

December 14, 2005, Washington, D.C - Today the House passed the USA PATRIOT and Terrorism Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2005 conference report, which includes key provisions for South Dakota related to methamphetamine prevention and emergency responder formula funding. Rep. Herseth supported the bill.

The conference report included provisions to restrict retail sales of methamphetamine precursor chemicals such as pseudoephedrine, new import and wholesale regulations, improved international monitoring, and other provisions to toughen federal penalties against meth traffickers and smugglers. Rep. Herseth, who has been a strong supporter of these provisions, said "the manufacture, distribution and use of methamphetamines is a growing problem in rural parts of the country, including South Dakota. This bill will help South Dakota law enforcement officials fight the spread of meth and keep our communities safe." Earlier this year, Herseth helped secure \$250,000 for Methamphetamine Awareness and Prevention Project (MAPP-SD) through the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations bill.

Importantly, the bill did not include a proposed change in the distribution level of first-responder grants and instead retained a base minimum first responder funding level of 0.75% of total funds available. Herseth supported this decision as crucial to South Dakota's ability to develop and maintain basic emergency response capabilities and work to complete regional response coordination and capabilities.

Herseth said, "A terrorist could attack anywhere throughout the country, including less-populated states such as South Dakota that house national defense installations, national monuments, critical flood control infrastructure, and provide our nation with a substantial portion of agriculture commodities. It would have been a mistake to reduce funding to an inadequate

level, and I am pleased the conference report reflects suggestions made by me and others on behalf of rural America.”

Herseth stressed that while she strongly supports the goals of the USA Patriot Act to keep Americans safe, at the same time we must also strive to ensure that any legislation does not overreach and infringe on the very freedoms we seek to protect. She said, “The enhancement and strengthening of homeland security must be done in a way that preserves the civil liberties that are the cornerstone of our democracy. We must protect Americans and protect our American ideals at the same time.”

Rep. Herseth’s commitment to civil rights has been demonstrated by her repeated support for Rep. Sanders’ amendments to the Judiciary Appropriations Bill in both the 108th and 109th Congresses. This amendment would have prohibited the search of library records under the USA Patriot Act. In the 109th Congress, that amendment passed with broad support as part of the Science, State, Judiciary, and Commerce Appropriations bill.

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Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth serves South Dakota in the U.S. House of Representatives. She is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of moderate Democrats committed to fiscal discipline and strong national security, and is co-chair of the Rural Working Group, which is dedicated to raising the profile of issues important to rural America. She also serves on three committees vital to South Dakota’s interests: Agriculture, Veterans’ Affairs and Resources.